

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8961

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LIMDIS

PLEASE PASS WHITE HOUSE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: VISIT CHARLES PORTER

REF: A. STATE 235515; B. TEHRAN 9093; C. STATE 231622

1. CHARLES PORTER FORMER DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSMAN-OREGON CALLED ON DCM NOVEMBER 7 TO PURSUE HIS INTERESTS IN ASCERTAINING THE PRESENT CONDITION AND STATUS OF ALLEGED POLITICAL PRISONERS IN IRAN. PORTER HAD EARLIER WRITTEN A LETTER TO THE SHAH OUTLINING HIS INTERESTS AND ASKING THAT HE BE PERMITTED TO INTERVIEW CERTAIN IRANIAN NATIONALS SAID TO BE JAILED FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THIS LETTER WAS AVAILABLE TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE GOI ACCORDINGLY WAS WELL AWARE OF PORTER'S INTERESTS IN ADVANCE OF HIS ARRIVAL. ACTING ON REFTEL A, THE EMBASSY SOUGHT APPOINTMENTS WITH APPROPRIATE GOI OFFICIALS ON PORTER' BEHALF, AND ON THREE DIFFERENT OCCASIONS WAS ADVISED THAT THE GOI HAD NO DESIRE TO RECEIVE HIM.

2. WHEN PORTER MET WITH THE DCM, HE WAS INFORMED OF GOI'S DECISION. HE PRESSED THE DCM FOR AN EXPLANATION. HE WAS TOLD THAT WE WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO INTERPRET GOI'S DECISIONS OR THE MOTIVES THAT MIGHT LIE BEHIND THEM. HE REJOINED THAT THE WORSE POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION

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WOULD BE MADE OF THIS DECISION, AS IT SUGGESTED THAT

THE GOI WAS ATTEMPTING TO CONCEAL INFORMATION WHICH WOULD REFLECT ADVERSELY ON ITS POLITICAL SYSTEM AND LEADERSHIP.

3. IN RESPONSE TO PORTER'S INSISTENCE ON AN EXPLANATION OF THE GOI'S ATTITUDE, THE DCM NOTED RECENT ARTICLES ON IRAN THAT HAVE APPEARED IN NEWSWEEK, HARPERS AND FORTUNE. HE NOTED ALSO LOCAL PRESS REACTION TO THE NEWSWEEK ARTICLE WHICH CONSIDERED IT A GROSS AND OUTRAGEOUS MISREPRESENTATION OF CONDITIONS IN IRAN. HE OFFERED HIS PERSONAL SPECULATION THAT THESE ARTICLES, WHICH HAD IN PART BEEN THE OUTCOME OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE SHAH AND SENIOR GOI OFFICIALS, MAY HAVE LED TO THE CONCLUSION WITHIN GOI CIRCLES THAT IT WAS NOT PARTICULARLY PRODUCTIVE TO DISCUSS IRANIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS WITH OUTSIDERS.

4. PORTER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED HIS VISIT WITH IRANIAN AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI IN WASHINGTON PRIOR TO COMING HERE. (REFTEL C) HE COMMENTED THAT THIS MAY HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE IN TERMS OF GAINING ACCESS TO GOI OFFICIALS BUT SAID THAT HE HAD FELT COMPELLED TO AVOID SUCH CONTACT FOR FEAR HE MIGHT COMPROMISE HIS IRANIAN CLIENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. WHILE EXPRESSING SHARP DISAPPOINTMENT THAT RESPONSIBLE GOI OFFICIALS WERE UNWILLING TO RECEIVE HIM (AND IMPLYING THAT THE EMBASSY MIGHT HAVE DONE BETTER ON HIS BEHALF), HE CONCLUDED BY REMARKING THAT HE HAD NOT REALLY EXPECTED TO SEE ALLEGED IRANIAN PRISONERS OR TO GET MORE THAN A BRUSH-OFF FROM THE GOI.

5. PORTER SPENT THE BALANCE OF AN HOUR AND A HALF REGALING THE DCM WITH PERSONAL VIGNETTES OF PAST AND PRESENT AMERICAN POLITICAL PERSONALITIES AND PRESIDENTS, THE SHORTCOMINGS OF US REGULATORY AGENCIES AND HIS IDEAS ABOUT NATIONALIZING THE OIL INDUSTRY IN THE US. HE ALSO ASKED FOR COUNSEL ON A GOOD EAR DOCTOR AND THE BEST PLACE TO BUY CAVIAR IN TEHRAN. HELMS

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